

Wayne Allard

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ALLARD ANNOUNCES HHS CHANGES IN COLORADO'S CHILDREN'S HEALTH CARE PROGRAM SAYS CHANGES WILL IMPROVE COVERAGE FOR COLORADO CHILDREN

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-CO) has been informed today by Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson that he has approved two changes in the Colorado State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) that will improve access to affordable healthcare for low income children.

"Colorado is unique in that it has created its own separate child health program for lower income families," Allard said. "I couldn't be happier with the recent changes approved by Secretary Thompson which will aid the state in providing access to affordable health care for thousands of children across the State of Colorado."

The HHS decision will eliminate monthly premiums in the program and substitute a nominal annual enrollment fee of \$25 for one child or \$35 for eligible families with two or more children whose income is between 151 percent and 185 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL). In 2001, the FPL is \$17,650 for a family of four. In addition, the approved changes will streamline the state's application and enrollment process to make it easier for families to sign up for coverage.

"Colorado's efforts to streamline eligibility and make the program more affordable demonstrate how popular this program is with states and how vital it has proven to be for the families enrolled," said Secretary Thompson. "Both states and the Bush administration are enthusiastic about this program to get access to health care for children."

The SCHIP program provides matching federal funding to states to assist them in providing health insurance to children whose families earn too much for traditional Medicaid, yet not enough to afford private insurance. The State of Colorado expects to cover 29,743 children this year.

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